A TRAGEDIE OF ABRAHAMS SACRIFICE,

Written in french by *Theodore Beza*, and translated into Inglish, by A. G.

Finished at Powvles Belchamp in Essex, the xj. of August. 1575.

GEN. 15. ROM. 4.

Abraham beleued God, and it was imputed to him for righteousnes.



Imprinted at London by Thomas Vautroullier dwelling in the Blacke Friers.

1577

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

THEODORE BEZA TO THE READERS, GREETING in the Lord.

IT is now a two yeares, ſince God graunted me the grace to forſake the contrie where he is perſecuted, to ſerue him accordinge to his holy will. During which time, becauſe that in my aduerſity many fancies ranne in my head, I reſorted to Gods word, where I founde two thinges that comforted me maruelouſly. The one is the infinite number of promiſes vttered by the mouth of him which is the truth it ſelfe, whoſe ſayinges are alwayes matched with effect. The other is the multitude of examples, where-

of euen the leaſt are able enough, not only to encourage and harten the weakeſt & faynteſt harted in the worlde, but alſo to make them inuincible. Which thing we muſt needes ſee to haue come to paſſe, if we conſider by what meanes Gods truth hath bene mayntayned to this preſent time. Howebeit among all them that are ſet afore vs for example in the olde teſtament. I finde three perſons, in whome (to my ſeeming) the Lorde ment to ſet forth his greateſt wonders: namely, Abraham, Moiſes, and Dauid: in the liues of whome if men would nowe a dayes looke vppon themſelues, they ſhould knowe thē ſelues better then they doe. Therefore as I redd thoſe holy ſtories with wonderfull pleaſure and ſingular profit: there came a deſire vppon me to exerciſe my ſelfe in writing ſuch matters in verſe, not onely of intēt to conſider & remēber thē the better, but alſo to praiſe God by all the meanes I could deuiſe. For I confeſſe, that euen of

na-

ture I haue delighted in poetrie, & I can not yet repent me of it: neuertheleſſe it greueth me right ſore, that the litle grace which God gaue me in that behalfe, was imployed by me in ſuch things, as the very remembrance of them irketh me now at the hart. Therefore I gaue my ſelfe as then to more holy matters, hoping to go forwarde in them afterwarde, ſpecially in the tranſlating of the Pſalmes which I am now in hand with. And woulde God that the great number of good witts which I know in Fraunce, would in ſteede of buzying them ſelues about vnhappy inuentions or imitations of vaine and vnhoneſt fancies, (for ſo they be, if a mã iudge them according to truth) rather ſet their minds to the magnifying of the great God, of whom they haue receiued thoſe ſo great giftes, then to the flattering of their Idols, that is to ſay, of their Lordes and Ladies, whom they vphold in their vices by their fainings & flatterings. Of a truth it would

become thē better to ſing a ſong of God, then to counterfet a ballet of Petrarks, & to make amorous dities, worthy to haue the garlande of ſonnetts, or to counterfet the furies of the auncient Poets, to blaſe abroad the glory of this world, or to conſecrate this man or that woman to immortalitie, thinges which beare the readers on hande that the authors of them not only are mounted vp to the toppe of their Pernaſſus, but alſo are come to the very circle of the Moone. Otherſome (of which number I my ſelfe haue bene, to my great greefe as now) write twoedged Epigrams cutting on both ſides or ſharp-pointed & pricking at both endes. Others buzie them ſelues rather in ouerturning then in turning of thinges: & otherſome intending to inrich our tongue, do powder it with Greeke and Latine tearmes. But how now wil ſome man ſay: I looked for a tragedie, and thou giueſt vs a Satyre. I cōfeſſe that in thinking vpon ſuch mad-

nes, I was caried away and ouerſhot my ſelfe. Neuertheleſſe I ment not to rayle vpon good witts, but onely to diſcouer to them ſo plainly the open wronge which they doe both to God and to them ſelues, as they might through a certeine enuie, take vpon them to paſſe me in the deſcription of ſuch matters as I haue taken taſt of to their handes, according as I knowe that it ſhall be very eaſie for them, if the meaneſt of them will giue him ſelfe therto. But to come to the matter that I haue in hand, it is partly tragical and partly comicall: & therefore I haue ſeparated the prologue, & diuided the whole into pawſes, after the maner of actes in comedies, howbeit without binding of my ſelf therto. And becauſe it holdeth more of the one then of the other: I thought beſt to name it a tragedie. As touching the maner of dealing, I haue altered ſome ſmall circumſtances of the ſtorie, to apply my ſelfe to the companye. Moreouer I haue

followed the ground as neare the text as I could, according to ſuch coniectures as I thought moſt conuenient for the matter and perſons. And although the affections be very great, yet haue I abſteined frō wordes and ſpeeches to farre eſtraunged from the common ordinarie, notwithſtāding that I know it was the maner of the Greekes and Latines ſo to doe, ſpecially in their choruſſes, as they termed them. But I paſſed ſo litle of imitating them, that contrariwiſe me thinkes nothing is more vnſeemely, than thoſe forced tranſlations and ſpeeches drawne out of ſuch a lēgth, as they can neuer come to the pith of the matter: whereof I report me to *Ariſtophanes*, who iuſtly rebuketh the Poets of his time for it ſo often times. Verily I haue made a ſonge without a chorus, nother haue I vſed the termes of *Strophies*, *Antiſtrophies*, *Epirrhemes*, *Parecbaſes*, and other ſuch wordes, which ſerue to no purpoſe but to amaſe ſimple folke, ſeeing the vſe

of

of ſuch thinges is worne away, & they be not ſo commendable of them ſelues, that a man ſhould trouble him ſelfe to bringe them vp again. As touching the ortographie, I haue willed the Printer to followe the common order, notwithſtanding the fond fancies that haue ben ſet forth within theſe three or fower yeares in that behalfe. And I would gladly counſel the forwardeſt of them that haue altered it, (if they were men that would take any other bodies counſell then their owne) that ſith they will needes reduce it to the pronoũcing, that is to ſay, make as many faſhiõs of writinge, not onely as there are countries, but alſo as ther are perſõs in Fraũce: they ſhould firſt learne to pronounce, before they teach mẽ to write. For to ſpeake & write after their faſhion, he is not worthye to giue rules of the writinge of our tongue, which is not able to ſpeake it. Which thinge I ſpeake not to blame all thoſe that haue ſet downe their dowts in

that behalf, which I graunt are very needfull to be reformed: but for ſuch as ſette forth their dotages as certeine rules for al the world to follow. Furthermore, as touching the profit that may be taken of this ſingular ſtorie, beſides the things that are treated of it in infinite places of the Scripture, I wil refer it to him that ſhal ſpeake of it in the concluſion: praying you whoſoeuer you be to accept this my ſmall labour with as good will as I offer it you. *From Lauſan the firſt of Octobe.*

1550.

THE ARGVMENT OF THIS TRAGEDIE TAKEN OVT OF THE TVVO AND twentith chapter of Geneſis.

AFtervvard God tryed Abrahã, and ſayd vnto him: Abraham. And he aunſvvered, Here I am. Then ſayd he to him, take thyne onely ſonne out of hande, euen Iſaac vvhome thou loueſt, & goe into the country of Morea, & there offer him vp for a burnt ſacrifice vpon one of the hills that I vvill shevve thee. Abraham therefore riſing earely, ſadled his aſſe & tooke tvvo ſeruants vvith him, & Iſaac his ſonne. And vvhen he had cut vvood for the burnt ſacrifice, he aroſe and vvent to the place that God had told him of. The third day, Abraham loking vp, ſavv the place a farre of, and ſayd to his ſeruaunts, tarry you here vvith the Aſſe, for I and the ladde vvil goe yonder, and vvhen vve haue

ped vve vvill come to you againe. Then Abraham tooke the vvood for the burnt ſacrifice, & layd it vpon Iſaac his ſonne, & tooke the fire and a knife in his ovvne hand, and ſo they vvent forth togither. Then ſayd Iſaac to Abraham his father. My father. Abraham aunſvvered, here I am my ſonne. And he ſaid, Beholde here is fire and vvood, but vvhere is the Lambe for burnt ſacrifice. Abraham aunſvvered, my ſonne, God vvill proaide him a lambe for burnt ſacrifice. And they vvent on both togither. And vvhen they came to the place that God had ſpoken of, he builded an altar there, and layd the vvood in order vppon it, and then bound Iſaac his ſonne & laid him vpon the altar aboue the vvood, and putting forth his hand cavvght the knife to ſtryke of his ſonnes necke. Then an Angell of the Lord cryed vnto him from heauen, ſaying Abrahã, Abraham. VVho aunſvvered, loe here I am. And he ſayd vnto him, lay not thy hand vpon the child, nother doe any thing vnto him. For novv I knovve thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou

haſt

haſt not ſpared thine only ſone for my ſake. & Abrahã loked vp & ſavv, & behold a sheep vvas cavvght behind him in a bush by the hornes. Then Abraham vvent and tooke the sheepe, and offered it vp for a burnt offering in ſteede of his ſonne. And Abraham called the name of the place, The Lord ſhall ſee. *VVhereof it is ſayd at this day of that mounteyne,* The Lord ſhal be ſeene. *And the Angell of the Lord called vnto Abraham from out of heauen the ſecond tyme, ſaying: I haue ſvvorne by my ſelfe ſayth the Lorde, for as much as thou haſt done this thing, & not ſpared thyne onely ſonne, I vvill bleſſe thee and multiply thy ſeede as the ſtarres of the ſky, & as the ſand on the ſea shore, and thy ſeede ſhall poſſeſſe the gates of thyne enemies. And all nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in thy ſeede, becauſe thou haſt obeyed my voyce.*

The ſpeakers.

The Prologue.
Abraham.
Sara.
Iſaac.
A companie of shepherds of Abrahams ovvne houſe diuided in tvvo partes.
The Angell.
Satan.

GOd ſaue you euerychone both great and ſmall
Of all degrees: right welcom be you all.
It is now long, at leaſt as ſeemes to me,
Since here ſuch preace togither I did ſee.
VVould God we might each weeke through all the yeare
See ſuch reſort in Churches as is here.
Ye Gentlemen and Ladies, I ye pray
Giue eare and harken what I haue to ſay.
To hold your peace alonly I require.
VVhat weene you (ſome wil ſay) by that deſire
VVe nother can nor will away with that.
But yit you muſt, or elſe I tell you flat,
That both of vs our labour loſe togither,
In ſpeaking I, and you in comming hither.
VVherefore I craue but ſilence at your hand,
My wordes with patience for to vnderſtand.
Both great and ſmall, alonly doe but heare,
And I will tel you ſtraunge & wondrous geere.
VVherefore now harken: for the thing is great
VVhereof I mind this preſent time to treate.
You thinke your ſelues pchaũce to be in place,
VVhere as you be not, now as ſtandes the caſe.
For Lauſan is not here, it is farre hence.
But yit when neede requires, I will diſpence
VVith all of you, that hence within an hower
Eche one may ſafely be within his bowre.

As now this is the land of Paleſtine.
VVhat? do you wōder at theſe words of myne?
I ſay yit further to you, ſee you well
Yon place? It is the houſe wherein doth dwell
A ſeruaunt of the liuing Gods, whoſe name
Hight Abraham the righteous man, the ſame
VVhoſe liuely faith hath wō him endles fame.
Anon you shall him tempted ſee and tryde,
& toucht to quicke with grefs that shal betide.
And laſtly you shall ſee him iuſtified
By faith, for killing (in a certeine wiſe)
Iſaac his deareſt ſonne in ſacrifice.
And shortly, you shall ſee ſtraunge paſſions:
The flesh, the world his owne affections
Not onely shall be shewed in liuely hew,
But, (which more is) his faith shal them ſubdue
And that it is ſo, many a faithfull wight,
Anon shall beare me record in your ſight.
Firſt Abraham, and Sara you shall ſee,
And Iſaac cke shall with them both agree.
Now are not theſe ſufficient witneſſings?
VVho minds therfore to ſee ſo wōdrous thīgs,
VVe pray him onely talking to forbeare
And vnto vs to giue attentiue eare,
Aſſuring him that he shall ſee and heare
No trifling toyes, but graue & wōdrous geere,
And that we will his eares to him reſtore,
to vſe them as he liſteth as before.

Abra-

Abraham commeth out of his house & sayth.



ALas my God, and was there euer any,
That hath indurde of cõbrãces so many,
As I haue done by fleeting too and fro,
Since I my natiue countrie did forgo?
Or is there any liuing on the ground,
Of benefits that hath such plenty found?
Loe how thou makest mortall men to see,
Thy passing goodnes by calamitie.
And as of nought thou madest euery thing:
So out of ill thou causest good to spring.
Was neuer wight so blessed at thy hand,
That could thy greatnes fully vnderstand.

Full threescore yeares and thereto fifteene mo,
My life had lasted now in weale and woe,
Accoꝛding to the course in sundꝛy wise
Appointed by thy heauenly destinies,
Whose will it was I should be bꝛed and boꝛne
Of Parents rich in catell, coyne, and coꝛne.
But vnto him that richest is in fee,
What ioy oꝛ comfoꝛt could his riches be,
When he compeld, compelled was (I say)
To see, to serue, and woꝛship euery day,
A thowsand foꝛged gods in steede of thee,
Which madst ẏ heauen & earth which we do see?
Thou then eftsoones didst will me to conuey
My selfe from those same places quite away.
And I immediatly vpon thy call,
Left Parents, countrie, goods with gods & all.
Yea Loꝛd, thou knowest I wist not whither thē
Thou wouldst me lead, noꝛ where me stay agen:
But he that followeth thee, full well may say,
He goeth right: and while he holds that way
He neuer needes to feare that he shall stray.

Sara comming out of the same house sayth.

In thinking and bethinking me what stoꝛe
Of benefits I haue had erst heretofoꝛe,
Of thee my God which euer hast pꝛouided
To keepe my mind and bodie vndefiled,

And furthermoze according to thy woꝛd
(Which I tooke then as ſpoken but in booꝛd)
Haſt bliſt mine aged time aboue all other,
By giuing me the happy name of mother.
I am ſo rauiſht in my thought and mind,
That (as I would full fayne) no meane I find
The leaſt of all the benefits to commend,
Which thou my God doeſt daily ſtill me ſend.
Yit ſith alone with thee Loꝛd here I am,
I will thee thanke at leaſt wiſe as I can.
But is not yun my huſband whom I ſee?
I thought he had bin further of from me.

Abraham.

Sara Sara, thy mind I well allow,
Nought haſt thou ſayd but I the ſame auow.
Come on, and let vs both giue thankes togither
Foꝛ Gods great mercy ſince our cõming hither
The frute thereof as both of vs hath found:
Let pꝛayſe & thankes from both of vs reſownd.

Sara.

Contented Sir, how might I better doe,
Than you to pleaſe in all you let me too?
And euen thereforе hath God oꝛdeyned me.
Agein, wherein can time ſpent better be,
Than in the ſetting foꝛth of Gods dew pꝛaiſe,
Whoſe maieſtie both ſhew it ſelfe alwayes,
Aboue and eke beneath, beforе our eyes?

Abraham.

Of truth no better can a man deuise,
Than of the Lord to sing the excellence,
For none can pay him other recompence
For all his giftes which daily he doth send,
Than in the same, his goodnes to commend.

The Song of Abraham and Sara.

Come on then, let vs now begin to sing
with hartes in one accord,
The prayses of the souerein heauenly king
our onely God and Lord.
His onely hand doth giue vs whatsoeuer
We haue, or shall hereafter haue for euer.

It is alonly he that doth mainteine
the heauen that is so hie,
So large in compasse and in space so mayne:
and eke the starrie skie,
The course whereof he stablisht hath so sure,
That ay withouten fayle it doth endure.

The skorching heate of sommer he doth make,
the haruest and the spring:
And winters cold that maketh folke to quake,
in season he doth bring.
Both wethers, faire, and fowle, both sea & land,
Both night and day be ruled by his hand.

Alas good Lord! and what are we that thou

dinst

didst choose and enterteyne
Alonly vs of all the woꝛld, and now
doth safely vs mainteine
So long a time from all the wicked rowtes
In towne & coũtry where we come thꝛoughouts
Thou of thy goodnes dꝛewest vs away
from places that are giuen
To serue false gods: and at this pꝛesent day
hast wandꝛingly vs dꝛiuen,
To trauell still among a thowsand daungers,
In nacions vnto whom we be but straungers.
The land of Egypt in our chiefest neede
thou madst to haue a care,
Thy seruants bodies to mainteine and feede
with fine and wholsom fare,
And in the ende compelledst Pharao,
Full soꝛe against his will, to let vs goe.
Foure mightie Kinges that were already gon
away with victoꝛie,
I ouertooke and put to flight anon
befoꝛe they could me spie.
And so I saw the feeldes all stained red (dead.
With blud of those which thꝛough my swoꝛd lay
From God receiued well this benefite:
foꝛ he doth mind vs still,
As his deere freendes in whom he doth delight,

and we be sure he will,
Performe vs all thinges in dew time and place,
As he hath promist of his owne free grace.

To vs and vnto our posteritie
this land belongs of right,
To hold in honor and felicitie
as God it hath behight,
And we beleue it surely shall be so,
For from his promise God will neuer goe.

Now tremble you ye wicked wights therefore,
which sowed are so thicke
Throughout ẏ world, & worship now such store
of gods of stone and sticke,
which you your selues w̄ wicked hād̄s do carue,
To call vpon and vainly for to serue.

And thou O Lord whom we doe know to be
the true and liuing God,
Come from thy place, that we may one day see
the vengeance of thy rodde
Upon thy foes, that they may come to nowght
With all their gods deuizd through wicked
(thowght.

Abraham.

Go to my Sara, that great God of ours
Hath bl'st vs, to thintent that we all howres
Should for his giftes which he alone doth giue,

Him ſerue and prayſe as long as we doe liue.
Now let vs hence and chiefly take good heede,
We hazard not our ſonne to much in deede,
By ſuffering him to haunt the company
Of wicked folke, with whom you ſee we be.
A new made veſſell holdeth long the ſent
Of that that firſt of all is in it pent.
A child by nature nere ſo well diſpoſed,
By bringing vp is quite and cleane tranſpoſed.

Sara.

Sir, I doe hope my dewtie for to doe,
Therefore the thing that we muſt looke vnto,
Is that Gods will may be fulfild in him.
Right ſure I am we ſhall him weeld ſo trim,
And that the Lord will bleſſe him ſo: as all
Shall in the ende to his high honor fall.

Satan in the habit of a Monke.

I goe, I come, I trauell night and day,
I beate my braynes, that by no kind of way
My labour be in any wiſe miſſpent.
Reigne God aloft aboue the firmament,
The earth at leaſt to me doth wholly draw,
And that miſlikes not God nor yet his lawe.
As God by his in heauen is honored:
So I on earth by myne am worſhipped.
God dwells in heauen, and I on earth likewize:

God maketh peace, and I doe warres deuize.
God reignes aboue, and I doe reigne belowe:
God causeth loue, and I doe hatred sowe.
God made the starrie skies and earthy cloddes:
I made much more: for I did make ỳ goddes.
God serued is by Angells full of light:
And doe not my faire Angells glister bright?
I trow there is not one of all my swine,
Whose grooyn I make not goldlike for to shine
These lechours, drunkards, gluttons ouerfedd,
Whose noses shine faire tipt with brazell redd,
Which weare fine precious stones vppon their
Are my vpholders & my Cherubins. (skinnes,
God neuer made a thing so perfect yit,
That could the makers full perfection hit.
But I haue made, (whereof I glory may)
A thowsand worser then my selfe farre way.
For I beleue and know it in my thought,
therz but one God, & that my self am nowght.
But yit I know there are whose foolish mind
I haue so turned quite against the kind,
That some (which now is commõ long agone)
Had leuer serue a thowsand gods than one,
And others haue conceiued in their brayne,
That for to thinke there is a God is vayne.
Thus since ỳ time ỳ man on mowld was made,
With happy lucke I followed haue this trade

And

And follow wil (come losse or come there gain)
So long as I this habit may mainteine,
I say this habit wherewithall as now
The world is vnacquainted: but I vow
The day shall come it shall be knowne so rife,
Of euery wight, both child, yea man, and wife,
That nother towne nor village shall scape free
From seeing it to their great miserie.
O cowle, o cowle, such mischef thou shalt wurk,
And such abuse shall vnderneath thee lurke
At high noone daies: O Cowle, o Cowle I say,
Such mischief to the world thou shalt conuey,
That if it were not for the spitefulnesse,
Wherewith my hart is frawghted in excesse:
Euen I my selfe the wretched world shall rew,
To see ỹ things that shall through thee insew.
For I, than who, of all none worse can be,
Am made yit worse by putting on of thee.
These thinges shall in their time wout all faile
Be brought to passe. As now I will assaile
One Abraham, who onely with his race
Withstands me, and defies me to my face.
In deede I haue him often times assailed:
But euer of my purpose I haue failed.
I neuer saw olde fellow hold such tack.
But I will lay such loade vpon his backe,
That (as I hope) ere long I shall him make

A sonne of myne. I know that he doth take
The true Creator for his onely hold
To trust vnto: and that doth make him bold.
In deede he hath alliance with the trew
Creator, who hath promist him a new
Right wondrous thinges, according whereunto
He hath already done, and still will doe.
But what for that? If stedfastnes him faile
To hold out still: what shall his hope auaile?
I trow I will so many blowes him giue,
That from his hold at length I shall him driue.
His elder sonne I feare not: and the other
Shal hardly scape these hands of mine: ỹ mother
Is but a woman: as for all the meynie
That serue him, they be simple sowles as enie
Can lightly be: there is a ragged rowt
Of sillie shepherds, nother skild nor stowt
Ynough against my wily sleights to stand.
But hence I will and worke so out of hand,
To haue them, that vnlesse I misse my marke,
Anon I will deceiue their greatest Clarke.

Abraham comming out of his house agein sayth.

What euer thing I doe or say,
I weery am thereof streit way,
How meete so euer that it bee,

So wicked nature reignes in me.
But most of all it me mislikes,
And to the hart with sorrow strikes,
That seeing God is neuer tyde
In helping me, yea vndertyde:
I also likewise doe not streyne
My selfe, vnweerie to remayne,
In dew and trew acknowledgment
Of his great mercie to me sent,
As well with mouth as with my hart.

The Angell.

Abraham, Abraham.

Abraham.

Lord here I am.

Angell.

Goe take thyne onely deerebeloued sonne,
Euen Isaac, and bring him to the place
which hight ỹ myrrh of God: which being done,
Slea him in sacrifice before my face:
And burne him whole vpon a hill which I
Will shew thee there, goe hye thee by and by.

Abraham.

What! burne him! burne him! wel I wil do so:
But yit my God, the thing thou putst me to
Seemes very straunge and irksom for to be:
Lord, I beseech thee, wilt thou pardon me?

Alas, I pray thee giue me strength and power,
To doe that thou commaundest me this howre.
I well perceiue and plainly now doe find,
That thou art angrie with me in thy mind.
Alas my Lord I haue offended thee.
O God by whom both heauen & earth made be,
With whom intendest thou to be at warre?
And wilt thou cast thy seruaunt downe so farre?
Alas my sonne, alas, what shall I doe?
This matter askes aduised looking too.

A companie of Shepherdes comming out of Abrahams house.

The one halfe of them.

Hie time it is Sirs as I trow
We hie vs packing on a row
To our companions where they be.

The other halfe.

Euen so thinkes me.
For if we all togither were
We should the lesser neede to feare.

Isaac.

How Sirs, I pray you tary. Will
You leaue me so behind you still?

Shepherds.

Good child abide you there,

Or else our maister your father
And our mistresse your mother may,
Be angrie for your going away:
The time will come by Gods good grace,
That you shall grow and proue a pace:
And then ye shall perceiue the charge,
Of keeping flocks in feelds at large,
What daungers come from hill and dale,
By rauening beasts that lye in stale,
Among the couerts of the woode,
To kill our cattell for their foodd.

Isaac.

And doe ye thinke I would,
Goe with you though I could,
Before I knew my fathers mind?

Shepherds.

In deede a child of honest kind,
And well brought vp, ought euermore
His fathers and his mothers lore
In all his doings to obey.

Isaac.

I will not fayle it (if I may)
To die therefore: but will ye stay
A while vntill I ronne and know
My fathers will? *Shep.* Yea, therefore goe.

The song of the Shepherds.

O happy is the wight
That grounds him selfe aright
On God, and maketh him his shield:
And lets the worldly wize,
Which looke aboue the skies,
Goe wander where they list in field.

No rich, ne poore estate,
Can puffe or pit abate,
The godly and the faithfull hart:
The faithfull goeth free
Although he martred be
A thowsand times with woe and smart.

The mighty God him leeds,
In chiefest of his needes,
And hath of him a speciall care,
To make him to abide,
Euen at the poynt to slide,
When worst of all he seemes to fare.

Whereof a proofe we see
Our maister well may be:
For why, the more him men assayle
And vrge on euery side:
Lesse feare in him is spyde,
And lesse his courage doth him fayle.

He left his native soyle,

Hard famin did him foyle,
Which drawe him into Egypt land,
And there a king of might,
Tooke Sara from his sight,
Uniustly euen by force of hand.

But streit on sute to God,
The king through Gods sharp rod,
Did yeeld to him his wife streit way,
And Abraham neuer stayd,
But as the king him prayd,
Departed thence without delay.

And during this his flight,
He grew to so good plight,
That Loth to part away was faine:
Because, as stoode the case,
To litle was the place,
To keepe the flockes of both them twayne.

There fell a sodeyn iarre
Betweene nine Kings through warre,
Wherein fiue kings were put to flight,
And Loth him selfe, with all
His goods both great and small,
Away was caried cleane and quite.

Our faithfull Maister streit,
On newes of this conceit,
Made fresh pursute immediatly:

And hauing but as then
Three hundred eighteene men,
Did make the enmies all to fly.
And of the reſt kewd pray
The tenth to the Preeſt did pay.
And hauing done ech man his right,
Returnes home anon,
With commendacion,
For putting ſo his foes to flight.
But nother ſonne he had,
Nor daughter him to glad.
Which thing when Sara did perceiue,
She put her maid in bed,
To ſerue her huſbands ſted,
Bycauſe her ſelfe could not conceiue.
So Agar bare a ſonne
A thirteene yeares outronne,
Whoſe name is called Iſmael.
And to this preſent day,
Our maiſters goods are ay
Increaced paſſing wondrous well.
Then for the couenants ſake
Which God him ſelfe did make,
Betwene him and our maiſter deere,
Our maiſter and we all,
As well the great as ſmall,
At once all circumcized were.

Isaac.

My fellowes: God hath shewed himselfe to vs,
So good, so louing and so gracious,
That I can neuer any thing yit craue
Ne small ne great, but that I much more haue,
Than I desire. I would haue gone with you
(As you doe know) to see full fayne: but now
Behold my father commeth here at hand.

Abraham and Sara.

But it behoueth vs to vnderstand,
That if God will vs any thing to doe,
We must streyt wayes obedient be thereto,
And nother striue nor speake against his will.

Sara.

In deede Sir so I thinke and purpose still.
But yit I pray you thinke not straunge, that I
Doe take this matter somwhat heauily.

Abraham.

A good hart (wife) doth shew it self at neede.

Sara.

Thats trew: & therfore lets be sure in deede,
It is Gods will and mind we should doe so.
We haue but this child onely and no mo
Who yit is weake: in him stands all the trust
Of all our hope, with him it falls to dust.

Abraham.

Nay rather in God.

Sara.

But giue me leaue to say.

Abraham.

Can euer God his word once sayd vnsay?
No no, and therefore be you out of dowt,
That God wil keepe & prosper him throughout.

Sara.

Yea, but will God haue vs to hazard him?

Abraham.

No hazarding it is where God doth gard him.

Sara.

My hart misgiueth some mishappe

Abraham.

I nother dread nor dowt of any hap.

Sara.

There is in hand some secret enterprize.

Abraham.

What ere it be, it doth from God aryze.

Sara.

At least, if what it were you wist.

Abraham.

I shall ere long, if God so list.

Sara.

So long away the child will neare abide.

Abraham.

For that our God will well ynough prouide.

Sara.

Yea but the wayes now full of daungers are.

Abraham.

Who dyes in following God needs neuer care.

Sara.

If he should dyeth, ẽ farewel our good dayes.

Abraham.

God doth forelett mens dying times alwayes.

Sara.

Ie were much better here to sacrifyze.

Abraham.

What euer you thinke, God thinks otherwise.

Sara.

Well then Sir, sith it must be so
The grace of God with both you goe.
Adiew my sonne.

Isaac.

Good mother eke adieu.

Sara.

My sonne obey thy father still,
And God thee saue: that if it be his will
Thou mayst in health returne right soone ageiu.

My child I can not me refreyne
But that I needes muſt kiſſe the now.

Iſaac.

Good mother, if it ſhould not trouble you,
I would deſire you one thing ere I went.



Sara.

Say on my ſonne: for I am well content
To graunt thee thy requeſt.

Iſaac.

I humbly doe you pray
To put this greef away.
Theſe teares of yours refreyne,
I ſhall returne ageine
(I hope) in better plyght,

Than

Than now I am in syght:
And therefore stay this greef and wo.

Abraham.

My fellowes: we haue now to goe
Good six daies iorney ere we rest:
See that your cariages be prest
And all the things that we shall neede.

The companie.

Sir, as for that let vs take heede.
Doe you no more but onely shew your will.

Abraham.

On then: and God be with you still.
The mightie God who of his goodnesse ay,
From time to time euen to this present day,
So kind and gracious vnto vs hath be,
Be helpfull still both vnto you and mee.
Deale wisely howsoeuer that you fare:
I hope this iorney which we going are
Shall be performed happily.

Sara.

Alas alas full litle wote I
When I shall see you all ageine.
The Lord now with you all remayne.

Isaac.

Good mother God you guyde.

Abraham.

Farewell.

The company.

God guide, and keepe you through his grace.

Abraham.

Gowe on Sirs, let vs hence apace.

Satan.

But is not this ynough to make me mad,
That whereas I make euery man to gad,
And all the world to follow after me,
If they my finger doe but hild vp see,
And therwithall set all thinges on a roze:
Yit for all that I neuer could the moze
This false olde fellow bring vnto my lure,
For any thing that yit I can procure?
Behold he is departed from this place
Gods will full bent tobey in euery cace,
Although the matter neuer be so straunge.
But yit it may be that his mind will chaunge,
Or that he shall him sacrifyze in deede,
And so he shall if I may help him speede.
For if he doe, then Isaac shall be dead,
Whereby my hart shall be deliuered
Of that same feare least God in him fulfill,
The threate whereby he promist me to spill.
And if he chaunge his mind, then may I say

The gold is wonne. For may I once so play
My part, as for to make him disobey
Almighty Gods commaundment, or repyne:
Then were he banisht from the grace diuine.
That is the marke whereat I alwayes shoote,
Now hye thee Cowle, set forth the better foote:
Lets ronne apace, and by some cunning drift
Foyle him in feeld, or put him to his shift.

A Pavvze.

Abraham.

My children: this is now the third day
That we haue trauelld making litle stay.
Here must you tarry: as for me, I will
With Isaac goe yit further onward still,
Unto a place from hence yet distant more
Which God almighty shewed me before,
Where I must pray and offer sacrifyze
As he requires. Wherefore in any wyze
Abide you here, and stirre not hence. But thou
Sonne Isaac shalt goe with me as now:
For God requires in this behalfe thy presence.

The Shepherds.

Sir, sith you forbid vs we will not hence.

Abraham.

This bundle vnto him betake,
And I the fire and knife will take.

We shal (God willing) come again right soone
But in the meane while, wot ye what to doone?
Pray ye to God both for your selues and vs.
Alas, alas, was neuer wyght, ywus.

Shepherds.

We will not fayle.

Abraham.

That had such neede as I.
Well Sirs, I say no more but God be wy.

Shepherds

And with yow too.

Halfe the Shepherds.

It greatly mazeth me,

Halfe the Shepherds.

And me likewyze.

Halfe the Shepherds.

And me too, for too see
Him so dismayd which hath so stowtly borne
All haps that haue befalne him heretoofore.

Halfe the Shepherds.

To say he is afrayd of warre
Debate, or strife, or any iarre
It were no reason: for we knowe,
Abimelech the king did showe
Such honor to our maisterward,
That he not onely had regard

To

To visit him, but eke did knit
A leage with him which lasteth yit.
And as for howshold matters, what
Can he desire which he hath nat?

Halfe the Shepherds.

He liues in outward peace and rest:
But age perchaunce doth worck vnrest.

Halfe the Shepherds.

Of sunnes he hath but onely one
But in the world no such are none.
His cattell thryue in such great store,
As God doth seeme to giue him more,
Than he him selfe can wish or craue.

Halfe the Shepherds.

Nothing ye can so perfect haue,
But alwaies sumwhat is amisse.
I pray to God him so to blisse,
As soone to cure this his disease.

Halfe the Shepherds.

Amen, say I, if it him please.

Halfe the Shepherds.

Sure I suppose how ere the cace doth stand
He hath this time some weightie thing in hand.

The song of the Shepherds.

As howge as is the world we see
With all the things that in it be,

Yet nothing is so strong and sure,
That can for euer here endure.
Almighty God which all maintaynes,
Can nothing spie that ay remaynes,
Except him selfe: all else ech one
Indure short time, and soone are gone.
The sunne with bright and burning beames
Goes casting forth his cheerefull gleames,
As long as day in skie doth last.
Then darksom night doth ouer cast,
All kind of thinges both fowle and fayre,
With coleblacke winges aloft in ayre.
And of the moone what shall we say,
Which neuer keepeth at a stay?
Sometimes with hornes she doth appeere:
Sometime halfe full: now thicke, now cleere:
Anon with rownd and fullsom face
The night she fro the skie doth chace.
The twincling starres aboue on hye
Ronne rolling rownd about the skye,
One while with wether fayre and cleere,
Another while with lowring cheere.
Two dayes togither match, and ye
Them like in all poynts shall not see.
The one doth passe more swift away,
The other longer while doth stay.
The one, as though it did vs spyght,

Bereeues

Bereaues vs of the cheerfull lyght:
The other with his colour bryght
Doth ioy our hart and dim our sight.
One burnes the world with heate from skyes,
With frost and cold another dyes.
With purple, greene, blew, white, and red
The earth earwhile is ouerspred.
Anon a blast of nipping cold
Waks freshest thinges looke seare and old.
The riuers with their waters moyst
Aboue their bankes are often hoyst,
And passe their bownds with rage so sarre,
That they the plowmans hope doe marre.
And afterward they fall within
Their chanells, ronning lank and thin.
And therefore whoso doth him grownd,
On awght that in the world is sownd,
Beneath or in the starrie skyes,
I say I count him nothing wyze.
What then of him is to be sayd,
Whose hope on man is wholly stayd?
Ech liuing creature subiect is
To endlesse inconueniencis:
And yit among them all, the sunne,
In all his course which he doth runne,
Beholdeth not a feebler wyght,
Than man is in his cheefest plyght.

For he that is most wyze and stowt,
Is so beseeged rownd abowt,
And so assayld with vices strong,
That often he is throwen along.
What a foole is he, whose hart
Thinks to be free from wo and smart,
So long as he doth liue on mowld?
But if that any creature wowld
Be sure t'accumplish that desire:
He must goe set his hart moze higher.
Whereof our maister righely may
A good example bee that way.

Halfe the Shepherds.

The best I thinke that can be now espyde,
Is for too drawbs one alyde,
That ech of vs may by him selfe alone
Pray God to send our maister which is gone,
A safe returne with gladnesse.gowe.

Halfe the Shepherds.

I will not be behind I trowe.

A pavvse.

Isaac.

My father.

Abraham.

Alas a pooze father am I.

Isaac.

Sir

Sir here is woode, with fire, and knyfe redy:
But as for sheepe or lambe I see none here.
For you to offer.

Abraham.

O my sonne most deere,
God will prouide. Abide thou heere I say,
While I to God a litle whyle doo pray.



Isaac.

Good father go: but yit I pray you showe
Me whereupon this greef of yours doth growe,
Which doth (I see) so greatly you appall.

Abraham.

At my returne, my sonne, thou shalt know all.
But in the meane tyme pray thy selfe heere too.

Isaac.

It is good reason that I should so doe.
And therewithall I will ech thing addresse,
That first this wood may be in readinesse.
This billet first shall gin the order heere:
Then this, then that shall cloze togither neere.
Thus all these thinges are redie now and prest:
My father shall prouide for all the rest.
And now O God I will aside retyre,
To pray to thee, as reason doth requyre.

Sara.

The more we liue, the more we see, alas,
What life it is that in this world we passe.
Was neuer woman borne vpon the mould,
That for hir husband or hir yssue could
Hirselfe with me in happinesse compare.
But yis I haue indurde such greefe and care
These last three dayes since they went hence, þ
I am not able for my life to tell, (well
Which of the twayne hath greater to me beene,
The former ioy, or present peyne I meene
Which I haue felt these last 3. dayes, since they
Haue bin away: for nother night nor day
Haue I tane rest, bycause my mind doth ronne
On nothing but my husband and my sonne.
And of a truth I was to blame as tho,
In that I suffered them away to goe,

And

And went not with them. Of the six dayes three,
Alas but three my God, yit passed bee,
And yit three mo my patience still must proue.
Alas my God which seest me from aboue,
Both outwardly and inwardly alway,
Vouchsafe to shorten these three yeeres I say,
For were they much more shorter than they be,
They be not dayes, but moneths & yeeres to me
My God, thy promis putts me out of dowt:
But if thou long delay the falling out,
I feare I shall haue neede of greater strength,
To beare the peyne in holding out at length.
Wherefore my God, now graunt thou vnto me
I may with ioy right soone my husband see,
And eke mine Isaac in mine armes embrace
Returnd in helth and safetie to this place.

Abraham.

O God my God, thou seest my open hart,
And of my thowghts thou seest ech secret part,
So that my cace I neede not to declare.
Thou seest, alas thou seest my wofull care.
Thou onely canst me rid of my diseaze,
By graunting me (if that it might thee pleaze)
One onely thing the which I dare not craue.

Satan.

An other song then this yit must we haue.

Abraham.

What? what? and is it possible that Gods
Behest and deede should euer be at oddes?
Can he deceiue? euen to this present day
He hath kept towche in all that he did say.
And can he now vnsay his word? no, no.
But yit it would ensew he should doe so,
If he my sonne should take away as now.
What say I? O my God, my God, sith thow
Doost bid me, I will doe it. Is it right
That I so sinfull and so wretched wight,
Should fall to scanning of the iudgements
Of thy most perfect pure commaundements?

Satan.

My cace goes ill. O Cowle we must yit find
Some other way tassault this hagards mind.

Abraham.

It maybe that I haue imagined
Amisse: the more it is examined, (chaunce
The more the cace, seemes straũge. It was per-
Some dreame or wicked feend that at a glaunce
Did put this matter in my head for why,
So cruell offrings please not God perdye.
He cursed Cayne for killing of his brother:
And shall I kill myne Isaac and none other?

Satan.

No

No no. Neuer doe soe.

Abraham.

Alas alas what ment I so to sayne?
Forgiue me, Lord, and pluck me backe agein
From this leawd race wherin my sin gan go:
O Lord my God deliuer me from this wo.
This hand of mine shall certeinly him smight.
For sith it is thy will, it is good right
It should be doone. Wherfore I will obey.

Satan.

But I will keepe you from it if I may.

Abraham.

So doing I should make my God vntrew.
For he hath told me that there should insew,
So great a people out of this my soune,
As ouer all the earth should spred and ronne.
And therefore if that Isaac once were kild,
I see not how this couenant could be hild.
Alas Lord, hast thou made him thē for nowght?
Alas Lord, is it vaine that thou so oft
Hast promist me such things in Isaake,
As thou wooldst neuer doo for others sake?
Alas and can the things repealed be,
Which thou so oft hast promist vnto me?
Alas and shall my hope haue such an end?
Wherto should then mans hope & trusting tend?

The ſumme of all I minded to haue ſayd,
Is that to thee I hartily haue prayd,
To giue me yſſue: hoping that when thow
Hadſt graunted it, I ſhould haue liued now
In ioy and pleaſure: but I ſee full well,
The contrary to my deſire befell.
For of my ſonns, which were no mo but twayn,
To put away the one my ſelfe was fayne:
And of the other (O hard extremitee)
Both father I, and tormenter muſt be,
Yea tormenter, yea tormenter, alas.
But art not thou the ſelfe ſame God, which was
Contented for too heere me patiently,
When I did pray to thee ſo inſtantly,
Euen in the midds of all thy wrath and yre,
When Sodom thou didſt mind to burne w fire?
Now then my God and king, wilt thou ſay nay,
When for my ſelfe I vnto thee doe pray?
Whom I begate him muſt I now deface.
O God, at leaſtwiſe graunt me yit this grace.

Satan.

Grace? in my booke that word I neuer found.

Abraham.

Some other man my ſonne to death may wound
Alas my Lord, and muſt this hand of myne
To ſuch a ſtroke againſt all kind declyne?
How will it towch his wofull mother neere,

Whē of his violent death she needes shal heere?
If I alledge thy will for my defence,
Who will beleue that thou wilt so dispence?
And if men doe not credit it: what fame
Will fly abrode to my perpetuall shame?
I shall be shund of all men more and lesse,
As paterne of extremest cruelnesse.
And as for thee, who will vnto thee pray,
Or on thy word and promise euer stay?
Alas, may these hore heares of myne abide
The sorrow that is likely to betide?
Haue I alredy past so many daungers,
Haue I so trauelo countries that are straūgers,
In heate and cold, in thirst and hunger still,
Continewally obedient to thy will:
Haue I so long time liued lingringly,
Now in the end to dye vnhappily?
O hart of mine, clyue, clyue, asunder clyue:
And linger heere no longer time aliue.
The speedier death, the lesser is the greef.

Satan.

Now is he downe, if God send no releef.

Abraham.

What sayd I? what intend I? O my God
Which didst create and make me of a clod,
Thou art my Lord, and I thy seruant trew.
Out of my native countrie thou me drew.

The ſumme of all I minded to haue ſayd,
Is that to thee I hartily haue prayd,
To giue me yſſue: hoping that when thow
Hadſt graunted it, I ſhould haue liued now
In ioy and pleaſure: but I ſee full well,
The contrary to my deſire befell.
For of my ſonns, which were no mo but twayn,
To put away the one my ſelfe was fayne:
And of the other (O hard extremitee)
Both father I, and tormenter muſt be,
Yea tormenter, yea tormenter, alas.
But art not thou the ſelfe ſame God, which was
Contented forto o heere me patiently,
When I did pray to thee ſo inſtantly,
Euen in the midds of all thy wrath and yre,
When Sodom thou didſt mind to burne w fire?
Now then my God and king, wilt thou ſay nay,
When for my ſelfe I vnto thee doe pray?
Whom I begate him muſt I now deface.
O God, at leaſtwiſe graunt me yit this grace.

Satan.

Grace? in my book that word I neuer found.

Abraham.

Some other man my ſonne to death may wound
Alas my Lord, and muſt this hand of myne
To ſuch a ſtroke againſt all kind declyne?
How will it towch his wofull mother neere,
when

Whē of his violent death she needes shal heere?
If I alledge thy will for my defence,
Who will beleue that thou wilt so dispence?
And if men doe not credit it: what fame
Will fly abrode to my perpetuall shame?
I shall be shund of all men more and lesse,
As paterne of extremest cruelnesse.
And as for thee, who will vnto thee pray,
Or on thy word and promise euer stay?
Alas, may these hore heares of myne abide
The sorrow that is likely to betide?
Haue I alredy past so many daungers,
Haue I so trauelo countries that are straūgers,
In heate and cold, in thirst and hunger still,
Continewally obedient to thy will:
Haue I so long time liued lingringly,
Now in the end to dye vnhappily?
O hart of mine, clyue, clyue, asunder clyue:
And linger heere no longer time aliue.
The speedier death, the lesser is the greef.

Satan.

Now is he downe, if God send no releef.

Abraham.

What sayd I? what intend I? O my God
Which didst create and make me of a clod,
Thou art my Lord, and I thy seruant trew.
Out of my natiue countrie thou me drew.

How oftentimes hast thou assured me,
That vnto mine this land should lotted be?
And when thou gaue me Isaac, didst not thow
Most faythfully and constantly auow,
That out of him such ofspring should be bred,
As should this land throughout all ouerspred?
Then if thou wilt needs take him now away,
What should I thereunto against thee say?
He is thine owne, I had him of thy gift. (shift.
Take him therfore. Thou knowest best how to
I know thou wilt to life him rayze againe,
Rather than that thy promis should be vaine.
Howbeit Lord, thou knowest I am a man,
No good at all or doo or thinke I can.
But yit thy power which ay is inuincible,
Doth to beleef make all things possible.
Hence flesh, hence fond affections euerychone:
Ye humane passions let me now alone.
Nothing to me is good or reasonable,
Which to Gods will is not agreeable.

Satan.

Well, well, then Isaac shall dye: and wee
What will insew therof shall after see.
O false old hag, thou makste me soft to grone.

Abraham.

See where my sonne walks vp & downe alone.
O silie child! O wretched men, death oft

With

Within our bosoms lodgeth him full soft,
When furthest of we take him for too be.
And therfore right great need alwaies haue we
To leade such life, as if we fayne would die.
But wotest thou my sonne (alas) what I
Intend to say?

Isaac.

What pleaseth you good father.

Abraham.

Alas, that word doth kill my hart the rather.
Yit must I better corage to me take.
Isaac my sonne: alas my hart doth quake.

Isaac.

Father, me thinks that feare hath you dismayd.

Abraham.

O my deere child: it is as thou hast sayd.
Alas my God.

Isaac.

Sir if it may you pleaze,
Be bold to tell me what doth you diseaze.

Abraham.

Ah my deere child, wist thou what thing it were
Mercie good Lord, thy mercie graunt vs here.
My sonne my sonne, beholdest thou this fyne.
This wood, this fire, and eke this knife of myne?
This yeere my Isac serueth all for thee

Satan.

Of God and nature enmie though I bee:
Yit is this thing so hard a cace to see,
That euen almost it is a greek to mee.

Abraham.

Alas my sonne.

Isaac.

Alas my father deere,
Uppon my knees I humbly pray you heere,
My youthfull yeeres to pitie, if you may.

Abraham.

O of mine age the only staffe and stay,
My derling, O my derling, faine would I
That I for thee a thowsand times might dye:
But God will haue it otherwise as now.

Isaac.

Alas my father, mercie I kry you.
Alas alas I want both tung and hand,
Ageinst you in mine owne defence to stand.
But see, but see my teares for natures sake,
None other fence I can or will now make
Ageinst you. I am Isaac, none other
But Isaac, your only by my mother.
I am your sonne that thrugh your self hath life
And will you let it be bereft with knife?
Howbeit, if you do't to obey the Lord,

Then on my knees I humbly doe accord,
To suffer all that euer God and yow,
Shall think expedient for too doo as now.
But yit what deeds, what deeds of mine deserue
This death O God, my God my life preserue.

Abraham.

Alas my sonne, God hath commaunded me
To make an offring vnto him of thee,
To my great greef, to my great greef and pine,
And endlesse wo.

Isaac.

Alas poore mother mine.
How many deathes shall my death giue to thee?
But tell me yit, my killer who shall be?

Abraham.

Who? my deere son! my God my God graunt
That I may dy now prest in this place. (grace,

Isaac.

O father mine.

Abraham.

Alas, no whit that name
Agrees to me, yit should we be to blame
If we obeyd not God. Isaac. Sir I am redy.

Satan.

(stedie?
Who would haue thought he would haue bin so

Isaac.

Now then my father, well I see in deede
That I must dye. Lord help me at my neede.
My God, my God, now strengthen thou my mind
And at thy hand such fauor let me find,
That of my selfe I may the vpper hand
Obteyne, ageinst this sodein death to stand.
Now bind me, kill me, burne me, I am prest
To suffer all, sith God so thinks it best.

Abraham.

Ah what a thing, a what a sight is heere!
Mercie good God, now for thy mercie deere.

Isaac.

Thou Lord hast made me and created me,
Thou Lord vpon the earth hast lodged me,
Thou hast me giuen ỳ grace to knowledge thee:
Yit haue I not so well obeyed thee
My Lord and God as dewtie doth require:
Which me to pardon lowd I thee desire.
And whereas I to you my Lord and father
Haue not alwaies such honor yeelded rather,
As your great kindnesse did deserue to haue:
Therfore forgiuenesse humbly I doe craue.
My mother: she is now a great way hence,
Wherfore my God vowtsafe hir thy defence,
And so preserue hir through thy speciall grace,

As

As she no whit be trubbled at my cace.

Here Isaac is bovvnd.

Alas, I go to deepe and darksom night:
Farewell as now for ay all worldly light.
But sure I am I shall at Gods hand find
Farre better things than these I leaue behind.
Good father, I am redy at your will.

Satan.

Was neuer child that spake with better skil.
I am ashamde, and therfore take my flight.

Abraham.

Alas my sonne, before thou leaue this light
And that my hand doe giue thvnkindly blowe,
Upon thy mouth let me a kisse bestowe.
Isac my sonne, let this same arme of mine
Which must thee kil, imbrace this neck of thine

Isaac.

With right good will and hartie thankes.

Abraham.

Ye skyes the great gods woork ay glistring in our eyes
Which well haue seene how God (who still is trew)
Did me with frute by Isaac here indew:
And thou O land fiue times to me behight,
Beare witnesse that my fingers doo not smight
This child of mine for hatred or for vengance,

But only for to yeeld my dew obeysance,
To that great God which hath created me,
And all the thinges that liue or moue or be:
Who saues the good that put in him their trust,
And stroyes the bad that serue their wicked lust.
Beare witnesse that I faithfull Abraham,
Through gods great goodnes stil so stedfast am
As notwithstanding all that humane wit
Can say or think, to make me now to flit:
In one beleef I euer doo remaine,
That not one word of God doth happen vaine.
But now my hand, high time it is that thow
Doo gather strength to execute thy vow.

Heere the knife falles out of his hand.

That by thy killing of mine only sonne, (ronne.
Thy deadly stroke may through my hart eke

Isaac.

What doe I heere?
Alas my father deere!

Abraham.

A, a, a, a.

Isaac.

I am at your will.
Am I now well? your pleasure then fulfill.

Abraham.

Did euer man so piteous cace yit find?

Was

Was euer any frendship yit so kind?
And was there euer yit so piteous cace,
I dye my sonne, I dye before thy face.

Isaac.

Away with all this feare of yours I pray.
Will you from God yit longer time me stay?

Abraham.

Heere he intendeth to stryke him.

Alas who euer yit so stowt a mind
Within so weake a bodie erst did find?
Alas my sonne I pray thee me forgiue
Thy death. It kills me that thou may not liue.



The Angell.

Abraham, Abraham.

Abraham.

Wy God heere I am.

Angell.

Into the sheath put vp thy knife,
And see thou doe not take his life,
Nor hurt the child in any wyse.
For now I see before mine eyes,
What loue thou beares't to the Lord,
And honor vnto him aword,
In that thou doost so willingly
Thy sonne thus offer euen to dye.

Abraham.

O God.

Isaac.

O God.

Abraham.

O Lord a man may see.

Heere he takes the sheepe.

How good it is obedient for to bee
To thee: the cace is fitly furnished.
I will go take him tyed by the head.

Angell.

O Abraham.

Abraham.

Lord heere I am.

Angell.

Thus sayth the Lord, I promis thee
By my eternall maiestie,
And by my Godhead: sith that thow
Hast shewed thy self so willing now,
Be to obey, as to forbeare
Thine only Isaks life: I sweare,
That mawgre Satan to his face,
I will thee blisse and all thy race.
Considerest thou the lightsom skye,
And on the shore the grauell drye?
I will increace thyne offspring more,
Than starres in heauen, or sand on shore.
Their enmies they shall ouercome,
And of thy bodie one shall come,
By whom my blissing shall spred foorth
On all the nations of the earth.
By him the treasures of my loue
And mightie power, shall from aboue
Be sheaded downe on all mankind,
Bycause thou hast obeyd my mind.

THE CONCLVSION.

SEE here the mightie power of earnest faith,
And what reward the trew obedience payth
Wherfore ye Lords & Ladies I you pray,
When you from hence shall go again away,

Let not this trew and noble storie part
Out of the mind and tables of your hart.
It is no lye, it is no peynted tale,
It is no feyned iest nor fable stale.
It is a deede, a deede right trew, of one
That was Gods faithfull seruant long agone.
Wherfore ye maisters and ye mistresses,
Ye Lords and Ladies all both more and lesse,
Ye rich and poore, ye sorie and ye sad,
And you also whose harts with mirth are glad,
Behold, and looke vpon your selues ech one,
In this so fayre example heere foregone.
Such are trew glasses, shewing to our sight,
The fayre, the fowle, the crooked, and the right.
For whoso doth vnfeynedly indeuer
(As Abraham) to keepe Gods sayings euer,
And (notwithstanding all the reasons which
His mind alledgeth backward him to twich)
Doth still referre him selfe and all his deedes
To God: with much more happy yssue speeds,
Than he can wish: for come there stormes or winds,
Come greef, come death, come cares of sũdry kinds,
Let earthquake come, let heauen & skyes downe
Let dark confuzion ouercouer all: (fall,
The faithfull hart so stedfastly is grownded,
As it abideth euer vnconfownded.
Contrariwise the man that trusteth no

His owne ſelfwit, therafter for to doe,
And ſtandeth in his owne conceyt ſhall find,
The more he goes, the more he comes behind.
And euery litle puffe and ſodein blaſt
From his right courſe ſhal quite & cleane him caſt
Agein, his owne ſelfwilled nature will
Him ouerthrowe and all his dooings ſpill.
Now thou great God which makeſt vs to knowe
The great abuſes which doo plainly ſhowe
The wretched world to be peruerted quite,
Make all of vs to take ſuch warning by'te,
As ech of vs may fare the better by
The liuely fauth ſet foorth before our eye
In Abraham that holy perſonage,
VVhoſe dooings haue bin playd vpon this ſtage.
Lo maiſters heere the happie recompence
VVhich God doth giue you for your gentle ſilence.

FINIS.

All prayſe and thanks bee giuen
to God. Amen.